



St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Audience: Staff/Governor/Public

Frequency of Review: Annually

Postholder Responsible for Review: Head teacher

Recommended Associated Documents:

Religious Education Policy

Catholic Life and Mission Policy

RSE Policy

Curriculum Policy

Behaviour Policy

Approved by the Full Governing Body –

Review – July 2024

Our School Mission

“We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord.”

Introduction

At St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Prayer and Liturgy is integral to developing the children’s relationship with Christ. Gospel values are embedded in all that we do with Christ at the centre. Prayer and Liturgy is central to our Catholic ethos and we expect all staff to lead and model good practice in prayer. It provides an opportunity for all to reflect on God’s word and to celebrate and respond to the beliefs and attitudes, which characterise Christian life. At St. John’s we strive to provide a rich variety of prayer and assemblies, which will deepen the pupil’s sense of belonging to the faith community of our school and to the wider church. Children take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy. We believe worship remembers and celebrates God’s work in our lives. It celebrates his presence amongst us today and allows children and staff the opportunity to be joined with Him. In our school, Prayer and Liturgy takes many forms including prayer, song, assemblies, meditation and liturgies. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to develop their relationship with God. Children are encouraged to meditate and reflect deeply on the Gospel Values and carefully consider how these will impact on their lives and the lives of others.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of Prayer and Liturgy for all pupils. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Prayer and Liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear. As part of this, we also take our duty of Safeguarding very seriously and we understand that personal prayer and reflection may subsequently lead to a disclosure which would activate our well established Safeguarding procedures. The act of Prayer and Liturgy is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. As a rule, acts of Prayer and Liturgy will take place on the school premises, or Church.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Prayer and Liturgy in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All Acts of Prayer and Liturgy in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be appropriately paced
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy

Type	Who	When	Location	Led by
Morning Prayer	All Classes	Start of each day	In classrooms	Class teachers
Gospel Assembly	Reception – Year 6	Monday at 10.10am	School Hall	Head teacher/ Deputy Head teacher
Grace Before/ After Meals	All classes	Every day	In classrooms	Class teachers
Meditation	All classes	After lunch each day	In classrooms	Class teachers
Afternoon Prayer	All Classes	Start of each day	In classrooms	Class teachers
Class prayer and Liturgy	All classes	Wednesday morning	In classroom or prayer garden	Children
Class Mass	x two classes	Friday at 9.30am	church	Children
Whole School Mass	Reception – Year 6	First and last Friday of each term/ Patron Saint Feast days/ Holy Days of Obligation	Church	Children
Hymn Practice	Reception – Year 6	Monday mornings	School Hall	Class teachers
Key Stage Assemblies	All classes	Thursday mornings	KS1 classrooms/ School hall	Class teachers
School Choir	KS2 classes	Thursday after school	School hall	Music Leader
The Rosary	Nursery – Year 6	Lunchtimes during October and May	School hall or library	Class teachers/ RE Leader and Liturgy Leaders
Stations of the Cross	Nursery – Year 6	Lent (Holy Week, if in school)	School grounds	Class teachers and Liturgy Leaders

Suggested Prayer and Liturgy Themes

Term	Virtues	Suggested Themes
Autumn 1	Compassionate and Loving	Start of School Year Education Sunday– Value Education (2nd Sunday September) St Teresa of Calcutta (5th September) World Day of Prayer for Day of Creation - Environment Harvest Fast Day Preparation (Last Sunday of September) St Francis of Assisi (4th October) Mental Health Day (10th October) Month of the Rosary (October) St John Henry Newman (9th October) Black History Month (October)
Autumn 2	Faith- Filled and Hopeful	All Saints and All Souls – Beatitudes (1st and 2nd November) Remembrance Sunday (Closest to 11th November) Christ the King Universal Children Day (20th November)

		St Andrew (30th November) Advent – Getting Ready Human Rights Day – Migrants Day, Amnesty and Prisoners of Conscience (10th December) Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Advent)
Spring 1	Eloquent and Truthful	Epiphany – Gifts to God/ New Year’s Resolution (6th January) Baptism of the Lord (1st Sunday OT) World Peace Day (2nd Sunday OT) Conversion of St Paul (25th Jan) Holocaust Memorial Day (27th Jan) St Josephine Bakhita – Abolition of Slavery (8th Feb) World Day of the Sick/ Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (11th Feb) World Epilepsy Day (14th February)
Spring 2	Learned and Wise	Lent – Charity CAFOD Family Fast Day (Follows 1st Sunday of Lent) Lent – Taking Action St David (1st March) International Women’s Day (8th March) St Patrick (17th March) International Day of Happiness (20th March) St Oscar Romero (24th March) Lent – Prayer and Moving to Holy Week
Summer 1	Curious and Active	Season of Easter St George (23rd April) 3rd Sunday of Easter – The Road to Emmaus Kindness 4th Sunday of Easter – The Good Shepherd Month of Mary (May) Pentecost
Summer 2	Intentional and Prohetic	Trinity Sunday & Corpus Christi St Anthony (13th June) Fathers’ Day (Third Sunday of June) Feast of St John the Baptist (24 th June) SS Peter and Paul (29th June) Reflections on the end of the School Year

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church’s seasons, this is supported by ‘Ten Ten’ planning and resources. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of Prayer and Liturgy
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils’ skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead and evaluate worship
- opportunities for children to listen, reflect and be prayerful.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year by SLT and more regularly by our RE Leader, the school's provision of Prayer and Liturgy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading Prayer and Liturgy.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Head teacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors annually. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

The Liturgical Year and What Changes in Each Season

The liturgy, or public worship, of all Christian churches is governed by a yearly calendar that commemorates the main events in salvation history. In the Catholic Church, this cycle of public celebrations, prayers, and readings is divided into six seasons, each emphasizing a portion of the life of Jesus Christ. These six seasons are described in the "General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar," published by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship in 1969 (after the revision of the liturgical calendar at the time of the promulgation of the *Novus Ordo*). As the General Norms note, "By means of the yearly cycle the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ, from his incarnation until the day of Pentecost and the expectation of his coming again."

Advent: Prepare the Way of the Lord

The liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, the season of preparation for Christ's Birth. The emphasis in the Mass and the daily prayers of this season is on the threefold coming of Christ—the prophecies of His Incarnation and Birth; His coming into our lives through grace and the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Holy Communion; and His Second Coming at the end of time. Sometimes called a "little Lent," Advent is a period of joyful expectation but also of penance, as the liturgical colour of the season—purple, as in Lent—indicates.

Christmas: Christ Is Born!

The joyful expectation of Advent finds its culmination in the second season of the liturgical year: Christmas. Traditionally, the Christmas season extended from First Vespers (or evening prayer) of Christmas (before Midnight Mass) through Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (February 2)—a period of 40 days. With the revision of the calendar in 1969, "The Christmas season runs," notes the General Norms, "from evening prayer I of Christmas until the Sunday after Epiphany or after 6 January, inclusive"—that is, until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Contrary to popular celebration, the Christmas season does not encompass Advent, nor end with Christmas Day, but begins after Advent ends and extends into the New Year. The season is celebrated with a special joy throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas, ending with the Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6).

Ordinary Time: Walking With Christ

On the Monday after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the longest season of the liturgical year—Ordinary Time—begins. Depending on the year, it encompasses either 33 or 34 weeks, broken into two distinct portions of the calendar, the first ending on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, and the second beginning on the Monday after Pentecost and running until evening prayer I of the First Sunday of Advent. (Before the revision of the

calendar in 1969, these two periods were known as the Sundays After Epiphany and the Sundays After Pentecost.) Ordinary Time takes its name from the fact that the weeks are numbered (ordinal numbers are numbers indicating positions in a series, such as fifth, sixth, and seventh). During both periods of Ordinary Time, the emphasis in the Mass and the Church's daily prayer is on Christ's teaching and His life among His disciples.

Lent: Dying to Self

The season of Ordinary Time is interrupted by three seasons, the first being Lent, the 40-day period of preparation for Easter. In any given year, the length of the first period of Ordinary Time depends on the date of Ash Wednesday, which itself depends on the date of Easter. Lent is a period of fasting, abstinence, prayer, and almsgiving—all to prepare ourselves, body and soul, to die with Christ on Good Friday so that we may rise again with Him on Easter Sunday. During Lent, the emphasis in the Mass readings and daily prayers of the Church is on the prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament, and the increasing revelation of the nature of Christ and His mission

The Easter Triduum: From Death Into Life

Like Ordinary Time, the Easter Triduum is a new liturgical season created with the revision of the liturgical calendar in 1969. It has its roots, though, in the reform of the ceremonies of Holy Week in 1956. While Ordinary Time is the longest of the Church's liturgical seasons, the Easter Triduum is the shortest; as the General Norms note, "The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (on Holy Thursday), reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday." While the Easter Triduum is liturgically a separate season from Lent, it remains a part of the 40-day Lenten fast, which extends from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, excluding the six Sundays in Lent, which are never days of fasting

Easter: Christ Is Risen!

After Lent and the Easter Triduum, the third season to interrupt Ordinary Time is the Easter season itself. Beginning on Easter Sunday and running to Pentecost Sunday, a period of 50 days (inclusive), the Easter season is second only to Ordinary Time in length. Easter is the greatest feast in the Christian calendar, for "if Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain." The Resurrection of Christ culminates in His Ascension into Heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which inaugurates the mission of the Church to spread the Good News of salvation to all the world

Rogation and Ember Days: Petition and Thanksgiving

In addition to the six liturgical seasons discussed above, the "General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar" lists a seventh item in its discussion of the yearly liturgical cycle: the Rogation Days and Ember Days. While these days of prayer, both of petition and of thanksgiving, do not constitute a liturgical season of their own, they are some of the

oldest annual celebrations in the Catholic Church, celebrated continuously for over 1,500 years until the revision of the calendar in 1969. At that point, the celebration of both the Rogation Days and the Ember Days were made optional, with the decision left up to the bishops' conference of each country. As a result, neither is widely celebrated today.

Liturgical Colours and Seasons

The different colours are drawn from creation to remind those participating in a liturgy of the different blessings of God.

The colours used are white (or gold), purple (or violet), green, red and rose pink.

White

White (or gold), since it is a festive, joyful colour, is used during the Christmas and Easter seasons, and on major feast days, such as, on the celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not martyrs, and on the Solemnities of All Saints. Because white symbolises the Resurrection, it is also the colour often used for funerals.

Purple

Purple (or violet) symbolises repentance and penance. Vestments of purple or violet are used during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

The colour reminds us of the violet flower that bows its head and is a symbol of humility. Lent is the season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It is a quiet season of reflection. The colour of Advent is more of a rose-purple, like the sky just before sunrise. This is the time of year when the Church waits in joyful hope to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Purple or violet dye was very expensive. An early Christian, Lydia from Thyatira, made her living from the purple dye trade and was able to support St Paul in his missionary work (Acts 16: 14-15).

Green

Green is a sign of life in nature and as such it represents growth, life and hope. Green is the colour worn most often during liturgies in Ordinary Time. It symbolises the graces that draw people into the life of God. Most of the Church's year is Ordinary Time.

Red

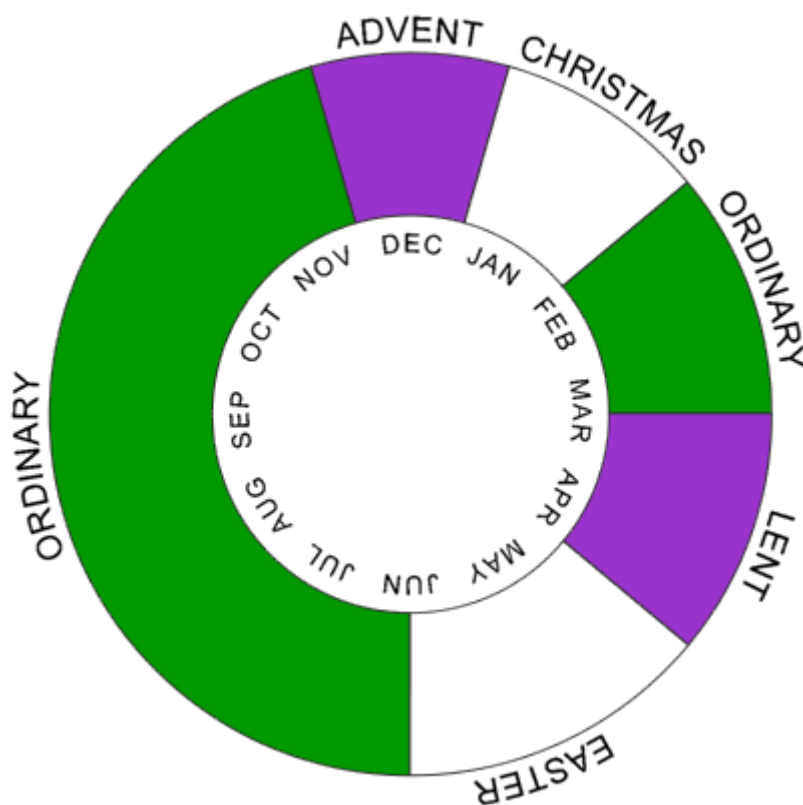
Red symbolises both blood and fire. It is the colour that is used on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, and for celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is also the colour that has traditionally been associated with martyrs – those who have shed their blood for their faith – and so it is worn on the feast days of martyrs.

Rose Pink

Rose pink is an optional colour that may be used on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent. On both of these days, the Entrance Antiphon calls us to rejoice, so the pink vestments mark a softening of the penitential tone of the season.

Liturgical Colours: The changing of the liturgical season is also accompanied by a change in the colours used for altar linens and the vestments of the celebrating priests and deacons.

- **Advent** – **Purple** on most days, except for *Rose* (optional) on the Third Sunday of Advent (“Gaudete Sunday”).
- **Christmas** – **White** or *Gold* (not red and green!), except for *Red* on the feast days of martyrs.
- **Lent** – **Purple** on most days; *Rose* (optional) on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (“Laetare Sunday”); **Red** on Passion/Palm Sunday.
- **Easter Triduum** – **White** or *Gold* on Holy Thursday and at the Easter Vigil; **Red** on Good Friday.
- **Easter Season** – **White** or *Gold* on most days, except for **Red** on Pentecost Sunday.
- **Ordinary Time** – **Green**, except for particular feasts or occasions that have other designated colours.
- **Special Colours for Particular Celebrations within any Liturgical Season:**
- **White** – Solemnities of the Lord and the Saints; memorials of saints (other than martyrs); major local feasts; and funeral liturgies (**Black** is now also allowed again for funerals).
- **Red** – Feasts and memorials of the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, or the Holy Spirit, almsgiving is also emphasized.



The Catholic Church sets aside certain days and seasons of each “year” to recall and celebrate various events in the life of Christ. Our “liturgical year” does not correspond to the calendar, but rather begins with the Season of Advent – as seen in the graphic. As we move through the liturgical year, each celebration of Mass is accompanied by readings from the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Gospels.

The Gospels are organized into a three-year cycle, designated A, B, or C. Year B follows year A, year C follows year B, then back again to A.

- **Year A: Gospel of Matthew**
(December 2016 through November 2017)
- **Year B: Gospel of Mark**
(December 2017 through November 2018)
- **Year C: Gospel of Luke**
(December 2015 through November 2016)

The Gospel of John is read throughout Easter, and is used for other liturgical seasons including Advent, Christmas, and Lent where appropriate.

Season of Advent

Advent is a time of watchful, joyful, and hopeful preparation for the Coming of the Lord, both the “first coming” of Jesus (Christmas) and his “second coming”.

- Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas; thus it is between three and four weeks long, but only rarely four full weeks
- Scripture Readings and Liturgical Prayers are slightly different for the three parts of Advent:
- *Beginning of Advent:* focus is on Eschatology and Messianic expectations, teachings about the future or end-times (esp. from the prophet Isaiah).
- *Middle of Advent:* readings from Isaiah continue, but focus shifts to Gospel texts about John the Baptist, the one who prepared for the coming of Jesus.
- *Dec. 17-24 (last week before Christmas):* focus is on the biblical events that immediately preceded the birth of Jesus; readings from Matt 1 & Luke 1 and special “O Antiphons.”

Season of Christmas

The Season of Christmas celebrates the Incarnation/Nativity/Birth of Jesus Christ. Not just *Christmas Day* itself, but a season of continued celebration for several weeks *afterward*. The exact length of the Christmas Season varies from year to year.

- *Christmas Day:* always on Dec. 25 (technically beginning on the evening of Dec. 24), so it can occur on any day of the week.
- Includes four different Masses (with different sets of prayers and readings): Vigil, Mass during the Night (popularly known as “Midnight Mass”), Dawn, and Daytime.
- *Christmas Octave:* intensive celebration for eight days, up to and including Jan. 1.
- Includes several special feasts: St. Stephen, St. John, Holy Innocents, Holy Family, and Mary, Holy Mother of God.

- *Christmas Season*: celebration continues through the Epiphany, up to the Baptism of the Lord.
- The *Epiphany of the Lord* was traditionally celebrated on Jan. 6 (the twelfth day of Christmas); now it is often transferred to the Sunday between Jan. 2 and Jan. 8.
- The *Baptism of the Lord* is usually celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany; but if Epiphany is Jan. 7 or 8, then the Baptism is celebrated on the following Monday.

Season of Ordinary Time – I (begins)

This liturgical season can also be called “Ordered Time” or the “Season of the Year” (when Sundays are sequentially numbered).

- The first part of “Ordinary Time” begins after the Christmas season (the day after the Baptism of the Lord) and runs up until Lent (which begins on Ash Wednesday).
- It varies in length between four and nine weeks (since the Christmas Season can end between Jan. 8 and Jan. 13, and Lent can begin as early as Feb. 5 or as late as Mar. 10).
- Anglicans and some Protestant Christians call this part of “Ordinary Time” the “*Season of Epiphany*”

Season of Lent

A season of preparation for Easter, Lent has both a penitential and baptismal character. Traditional penitential practices during Lent include fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. For those preparing to be baptized at Easter, the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (R.C.I.A.) includes a “Rite of Election” (usually done early in Lent) and three “Scrutinies” (done on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent).

- Lent is traditionally thought to be “forty days” long, but its actual length has changed over the centuries in contemporary understanding, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday afternoon.
- *Ash Wednesday*: a day of fasting and abstinence; Catholic Christians receive a cross of ashes on our foreheads as a sign of our mortality and repentance.
- *Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday*: the Sunday before Easter; the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is commemorated and the Synoptic Passion Narratives are read (Matthew, Mark, and Luke, on a 3-year rotating cycle).
- *Holy Week*: the week before Easter, beginning Palm Sunday (also known as Passion Sunday) and including the Easter Triduum (Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday).

Season of Easter

The Season of Easter celebrates the “Paschal Mystery:” the Death & Resurrection of Jesus Christ (the core/central event of Christianity).

- The date of Easter is variable on the solar calendar; it falls on *the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox*.
- It is celebrated on a different day by some Eastern Christians, who still base their liturgical calendar on the Julian calendar (in contrast to the Gregorian calendar).
- *Easter Triduum*: “three holy days” from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday evening:

- *Holy Thursday*: commemorates the “Last Supper” of Jesus with his disciples; the liturgy traditionally includes “the Washing of the feet” and is followed by a Eucharistic procession and a period of veneration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- *Good Friday*: commemorates the Passion, Death, and Burial of Jesus; a special non-Eucharistic liturgy focuses on the Johannine Passion, the Veneration of the Cross, extensive Intercessory Prayers, and sharing of Communion.
- *Holy Saturday*: commemorates the time when Jesus was in the tomb; no liturgical rites should be celebrated on this day (not before sundown).
- *Easter Vigil*: begins the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus; a special liturgy (celebrated Saturday after sunset, during the night, or Sunday before dawn) includes lighting of the Easter Fire and Easter Candle, proclamation of the Easter Exsultet, extensive readings from the Old Testament, and the Baptism of many new Christians.
- *Easter Sunday*: the day of Jesus’ Resurrection; the liturgy includes the renewal of Baptismal Promises for all the faithful.
- *Easter Octave*: eight days of intensive celebration, from Easter Sunday to the 2nd Sunday of Easter (now also known as “Divine Mercy Sunday” by Roman Catholics).
- *Easter Season*: a continued celebration for a full fifty days (seven weeks) up to and including the Feast of Pentecost.
- *Ascension of the Lord*: traditionally celebrated on the 40th day of Easter; now often moved to the following Sunday.
- *Pentecost Sunday*: seven weeks or fifty days after Easter, celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the first disciples.

Season of Ordinary Time – II (continues)

The Season of Ordinary Time – II is the rest of the liturgical year (up to 34 weeks total), from the Monday after Pentecost Sunday until the First Sunday of Advent, which begins the next liturgical year. Exactly when Ordinary Time resumes depends on the variable date of Pentecost.

- Several special celebrations fall soon after Pentecost:
 - *Most Holy Trinity*: on the Sunday after Pentecost
 - *Body and Blood of Christ*: traditionally Thursday, now the Sunday after Trinity Sunday
 - *Sacred Heart of Jesus*: Friday after the second Sunday after Pentecost)
 - Many other celebrations related to Jesus or to Mary or other Saints can be celebrated on weekdays during Ordinary Time.
 - Some of these can even be celebrated on Sundays.
 - The 34th or Last Sunday of Ordinary Time is celebrated as the Feast of *Christ the King*.
 - Anglicans and some Protestant Christians call this second and larger part of Ordinary Time the “*Season of Pentecost*.”